United Nations ST/SGB/2012/2

Secretariat

29 March 2012

Secretary-General's bulletin

Publications Board

The Secretary-General, for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations publishing activities in implementing the mandates of intergovernmental bodies, promulgates the following:

Section 1
Objectives and mandate of the Publications Board

1.1 The purpose of the Publications Board is to establish the publishing policies and standards of the Secretariat, including offices away from Headquarters and regional commissions, so that:

(a) United Nations publications[1] remain a source of high-quality, relevant and timely information for Member States, policymakers, practitioners, scholars and the public at large;

(b) United Nations publishing activities and practices are aligned with the overall goals and priorities of the Organization with regard to relevance, marketability, dissemination, production, cost-effectiveness and preservation of United Nations publications.

1.2 The Publications Board shall advise author departments on best practices in publishing. It shall promote the use of modern publishing practices and technologies that are cost-effective and demand-driven, in addition to the streamlining of publishing-related workflows throughout the Secretariat, including offices away from Headquarters and regional commissions. In particular, the Board shall strive to

[1] The term "United Nations publication" refers to any written material issued by or for the United Nations to a defined external audience. Examples of United Nations publications include major studies and reports, monographs, edited volumes, statistical compilations, conference proceedings, journals, serial publications such as yearbooks, the United Nations Treaty Series and other international law publications. United Nations publications are generally published in response to legislative mandates or requests by intergovernmental bodies. United Nations publications may be distributed free of charge or for a price. If sold, United Nations publications are assigned an International Standard Book Number (ISBN/eISBN) or, for serials and periodicals, an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN/eISSN). Publications may be published in print or electronic form, including as mobile applications, and in any other format or media as technology evolves.

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reduce the carbon footprint of the Organization by fostering digital publishing and localized printing (e.g. print-on-demand).

Section 2
Functions of the Publications Board

2.1 The Publications Board shall develop, revise and approve publishing policies, and update, as required, relevant administrative instructions, including on the following subjects:

(a) Criteria governing the selection of material for publication;

(b) Copyright of United Nations publications and other material published by or for the United Nations;

(c) Criteria governing multilingualism in United Nations publications;

(d) Criteria governing the use and display of the United Nations emblem and special and distinctive emblems, as referred to in section 2.2 below, in United Nations publications, co-publications, external publications, conferences, international days or years and outreach programmes;

(e) Criteria governing external publication arrangements, co-publications and reproduction of excerpts of United Nations publications and other material published by or for the United Nations;

(f) Criteria governing the granting of authorization for the publication of material created by United Nations staff in their outside activities, such as articles, contributions to edited volumes and commissioned books;

(g) Criteria governing the internal and external distribution, sales and preservation of United Nations publications in all formats and media;

(h) Criteria governing the United Nations Depository Library Programme.

2.2 The Publications Board shall be responsible for the final selection and approval of distinctive emblems for United Nations conferences, international days or years and outreach programmes.

2.3 The Publications Board shall solicit the biennial publications programmes[2] from author departments or bodies delegated by author departments. To assist author

[2] The term "publications programme" refers to a body of works planned for publication by an author department over a year or a biennium, generally in response to legislative mandates or other requests by intergovernmental bodies or other expert bodies. All United Nations publications should be included in publications programmes. Information and promotional material such as brochures, flyers, newsletters, posters, calendars, catalogues and press releases are not part of a publications programme. United Nations documents (as defined below) are not part of a publications programme. Also excluded are internal issuances such as preparatory documents, working papers and conference room papers consisting of background and technical documentation for meetings and seminars.

"United Nations documents" are texts submitted to a principal organ or subsidiary organ of the United Nations for consideration by it, usually in connection with an item or items on its agenda. United Nations documents are issued for or under the authority of intergovernmental bodies under a United Nations document symbol. United Nations documents include all official records and meeting records of organs or conferences of the United Nations. United Nations documents are issued by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management at Headquarters.

departments in aligning the planning process for publications with budget submissions, the Board shall issue instructions for the preparation of publications programmes in the second quarter of each even-numbered year.

2.4 Publications programmes shall be reviewed according to the following criteria:

(a) United Nations publications with a specific mandate[3] shall be endorsed. The funding source shall be clearly stated;

(b) Other recurrent United Nations publications shall be endorsed if they are adequately funded and expected to continue to be relevant and timely for key constituencies;

(c) Publication proposals for new titles (i.e. non-recurrent publications, publications that are not part of an existing series or publication proposals submitted outside the publications programme) and new series shall be reviewed based on relevance, timeliness and, as appropriate, marketability.

2.5 The Publications Board shall receive and review annual updates from all units in the Organization involved in publishing activities, including author departments. Such updates shall include information on publication costs, distribution, sales, licensing and impact.

Section 3
Composition

3.1 The membership of the Publications Board shall consist of one representative each of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of Legal Affairs at Headquarters, as well as representatives of the regional commissions and other offices away from Headquarters. In addition, the membership shall include a representative each of the publishing operations in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and in the Department of Public Information at Headquarters.

3.2 The Publications Board shall be chaired by the Director, Outreach Division, Department of Public Information.

3.3 The Chair may invite heads of organizational units and representatives of funds and programmes, in addition to internal or external experts who are not members, to participate in meetings when issues of specific concern to their area of responsibility or expertise are being considered.

Section 4
Operations

4.1 The Publications Board shall meet in person or via phone and/or teleconference twice a year, with communications via e-mail as necessary. It may be convened to meet on an ad hoc basis to consider matters of urgency.

4.2 The Publications Board shall prepare and submit an annual report on its activities to the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

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[3] A publication has a specific mandate when it is requested by a principal organ of the United Nations, by an intergovernmental body or by an expert body.

4.3 The Publications Board shall make publishing policies, publications programmes, the Board's annual reports, information on best publishing practices, referrals to publishing experts within the Organization, answers to frequently asked questions and other pointers to useful resources available through its website.

4.4 When required, the Publications Board shall establish ad hoc working groups on specific topics and issues.

4.5 The Publications Board shall engage regularly with author departments at Headquarters and with publishing entities in the regional commissions and other offices away from Headquarters.

4.6 The Publications Board shall liaise with similar bodies in the United Nations system with a view to harmonizing system-wide policies on publications and publishing issues.

4.7 The secretariat of the Publications Board is hereby established within the Department of Public Information. The secretariat shall prepare and service Board meetings, coordinate working group meetings, maintain the Board website and provide advice on the Organization's publishing policies, in addition to carrying out other functions that may be assigned to it by the Board.

Section 5
Final provisions

5.1 Secretariat departments and offices, offices away from Headquarters and regional commissions shall be responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures prescribed by the Publications Board.

5.2 The present bulletin shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

5.3 Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2005/15 of 24 May 2005 and administrative instruction ST/AI/189/Add.1/Rev.2 of 1 October 1990 are hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon
Secretary-General